

TRANS FORMERS



THE ART OF
P-R-I-M-E



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P — R — I — M — E

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"I can't draw. Not a lick. So, on Transformers Prime, I surrounded myself with some of the very best artists I'd had the pleasure of working with during the past 15 years. And we all pretended that I was in charge."

-Jeff Klein, *Executive Producer*



DARKMOUNT EXTERIOR

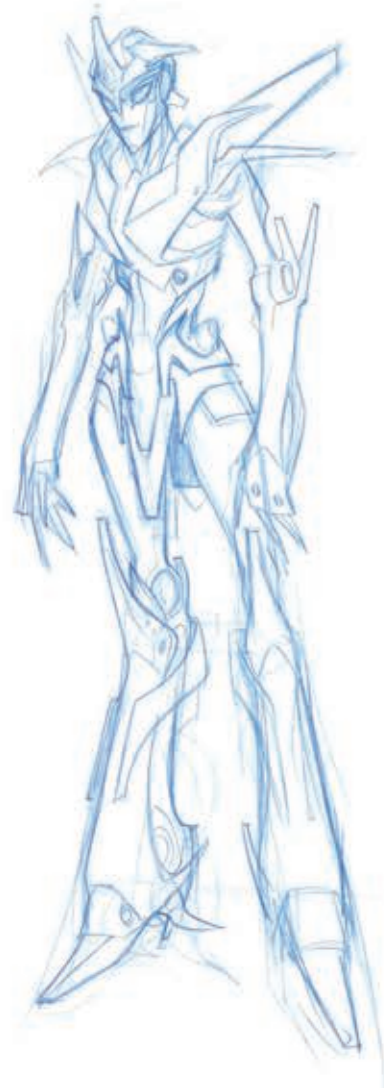


TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD & INTRODUCTION	PG. 7
PART ONE: CHARACTER & PROP DESIGN	PG. 8
CHAPTER ONE: AUTOBOTS	PG. 12
CHAPTER TWO: DECEPTICONS	PG. 56
CHAPTER THREE: HUMANS & PROPS	PG. 106
PART TWO: BACKGROUNDS & SETS	PG. 118
CHAPTER FOUR: EARTH	PG. 122
CHAPTER FIVE: CYBERTRONIAN LOCALES	PG. 152
PART THREE: COLOR & EFFECTS	PG. 176
CHAPTER SIX: EFFECTS	PG. 180
CHAPTER SEVEN: MATTE PAINTINGS	PG. 194
AFTERWORD	PG. 208



DARKMOUNT THRONE ROOM



FOREWORD: Peter Cullen

It is said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, but *Transformers Prime* proves that sometimes those who hold the past with great reverence are fortunate to repeat it.

Transformers has been an important part of the popular culture, and my own personal and professional life, for close to 30 years. Transformers shows have come and gone, but few have managed to recapture the feel of the original like *Transformers Prime* has. Looking through the pages of this book, it's clear as to why. Everyone involved in building this world knew they were making something special. The breathtaking visuals and spectacular designs lean on what went before, but never hesitate to take that leap of faith into the modern era.

I am proud to have contributed my own efforts to Transformers, and hope you enjoy this collection showcasing the work of the talented artists and designers who made *Prime* such a success. 'Til all are one!

-Peter Cullen, the voice of Optimus Prime

INTRODUCTION: Jim Sorenson

Transformers has been around for a long time. In that time, there have been some six HUNDRED episodes produced for more than a dozen series. Despite this vast sea of material to compare to, *Transformers Prime* stands apart. There can be little doubt that *Prime* shattered the expectations of what it was possible for a Transformers (or, indeed, ANY CG) television show to look like. One need merely flip through the pages of this book to get a sense as to how detailed, how intricate, how beautiful the world of *Prime* is. Truly, *Prime's* team did an amazing job in realizing a universe.

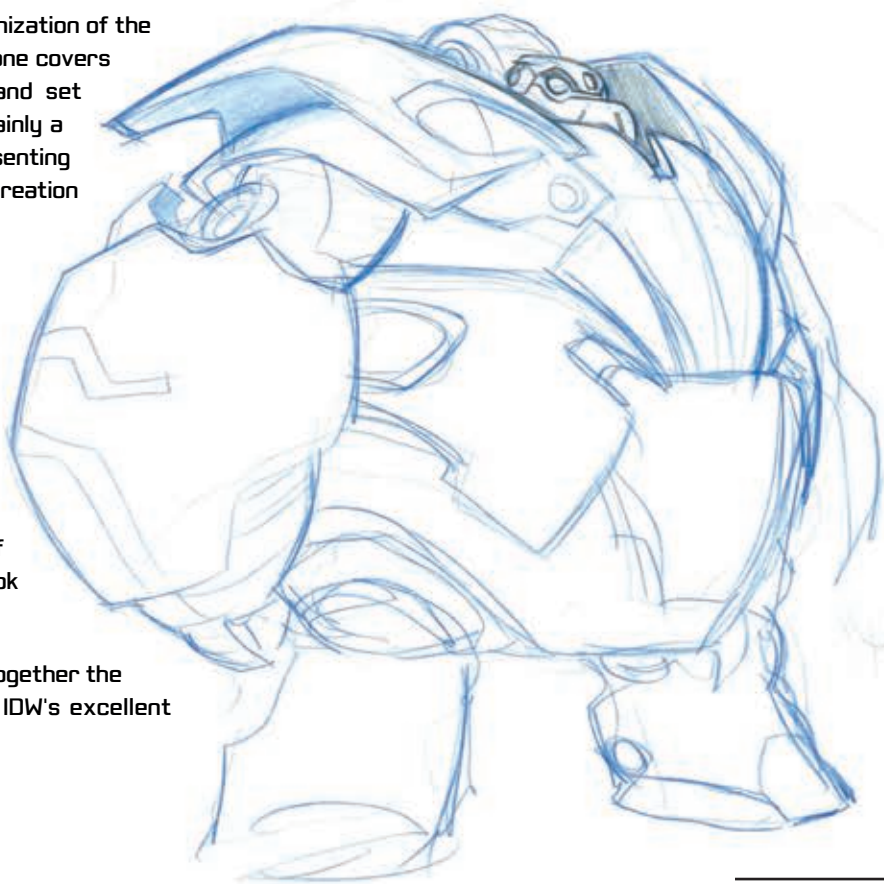
I was fortunate enough to be able to speak with many of the architects of this modern day mythology. In these pages, you'll read the words of folks like David Hartman, the Supervising Director responsible for the overall look and feel of the show; Jose Lopez, the Art Director whose team was responsible for the design of all characters and props in the show; Production Designer Vince Toyama, whose staff created the sets and environments that were practically characters in their own right; and VFX Director (and longtime advocate of this project) Christophe Vache, whose team suffused the characters and environments with the spark of life through the artful use of color. Their insights were invaluable and have turned this book from merely a collection of (admittedly very pretty) pictures to a tome chocked full of information about the hows and whys behind the images.

In the interest of better presenting the process, the organization of the book reflects the organization of the artistic team. Part one covers character and prop design; part two, environmental and set design; part three, color and effects. While there is certainly a great deal of crossover among the three, I feel that presenting the artwork in this manner better reflects the underlying creation of the material.

In addition to the four gentlemen listed above, I would be remiss if I didn't thank Executive Producer Jeff Kline, Animation Producer Therese Trujillo, and most especially Production Manager Mathias Dougherty, whose diligence and patience in setting up interviews and procuring material for me have proven invaluable. And, of course, a big thank you to everyone on the *Prime* staff for producing a surfeit of material for me to choose from. Believe me, folks, the artwork in this book is just the tip of the iceberg. If my editor had let me, I'd have made this book twice as long!

I am humbled and honored to have had the chance to pull together the material they produced and fashion it (with the help of IDW's excellent production staff) into this volume. I hope we did it justice.

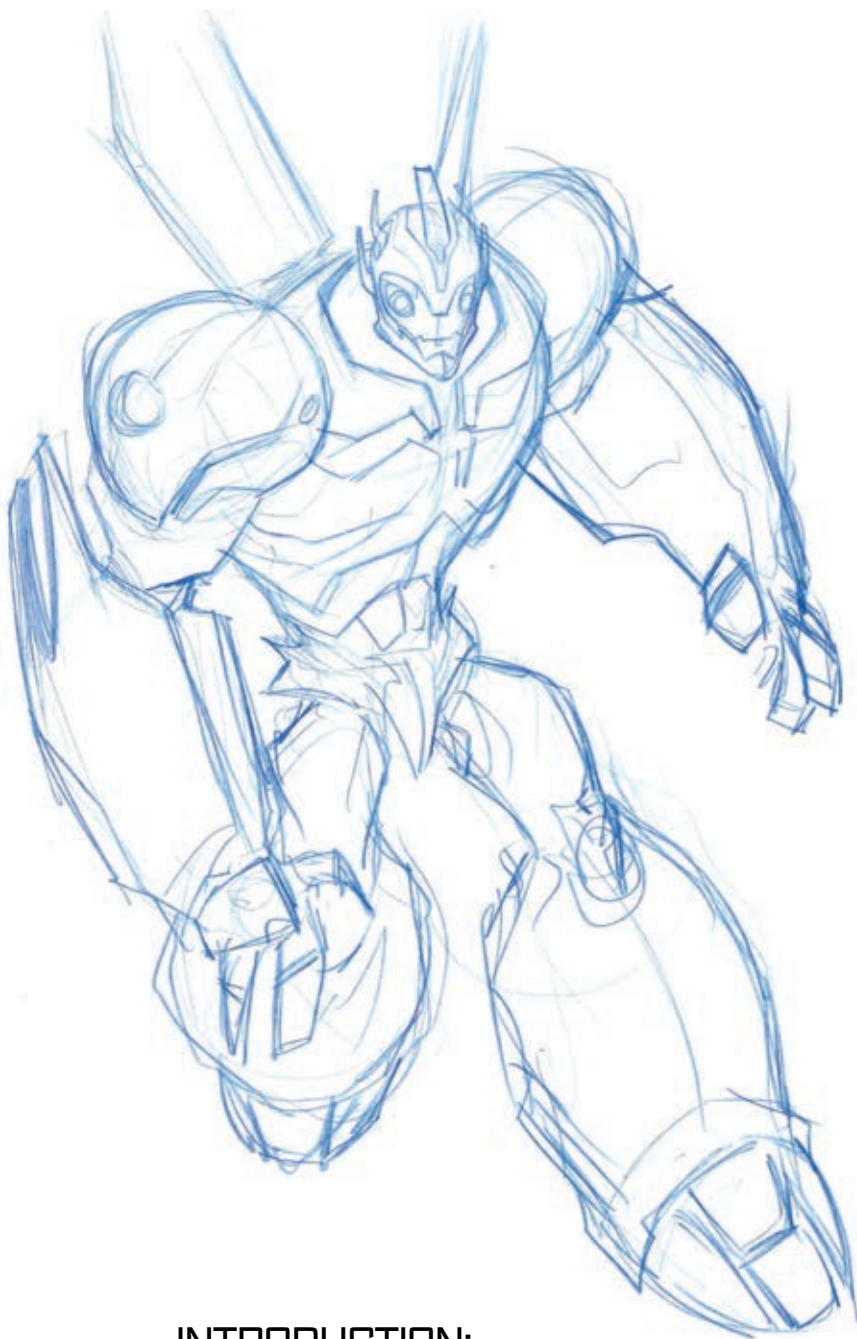
-Jim Sorenson



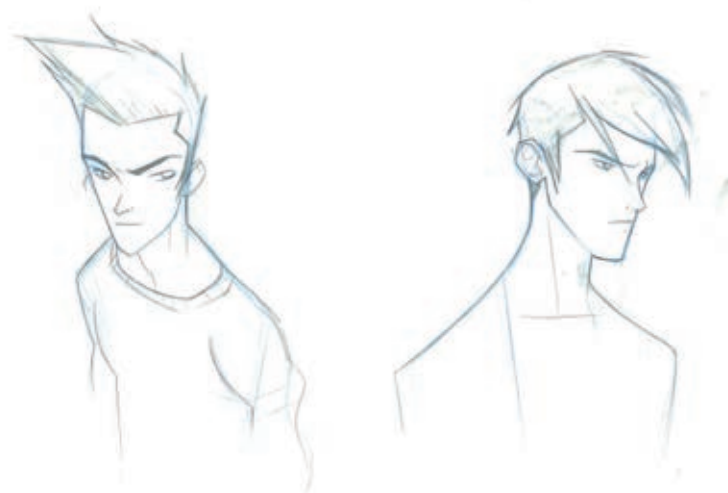
Part One:
CHARACTER & PROP DESIGN







SCRAPLET



INTRODUCTION:

Jose Lopez - Art Director / Characters & Props

Optimus Prime was my childhood hero. Being a kid growing up in the '80s, I was fortunate to be exposed to a wide array of animated shows and action figures. These franchises shaped our generation's imagination, and in many ways inspired some of us into the careers we have now as adults. Transformers had all the elements to make it an instant classic; giant robots fighting an intergalactic war here on our planet, disguised as everyday vehicles. I could only wish my dad's car would transform into an Autobot, but since that wasn't going to happen, spending hours drawing Optimus was the next best thing.

As a designer in animation you often come across the opportunity to revisit your childhood heroes and be a part of their world from the driver's seat. *Transformers Prime* gave me the chance to submerge myself into the world of Autobots and Decepticons and take a stab at giving them a fresh new look. I still remember losing sleep at the thought of redesigning Optimus, but I have to say that this opportunity has truly been an honor. *Prime* is to this point the highlight of my career both in terms of challenges and rewards. It's one of the sickest shows on TV.

Design, animation, and product; never before have I been so proud of what we have accomplished. From creating a new style for the bots that maintains all the iconic elements which make them fan favorites to this day, to details like Starscream's infamous high-heels and Knockout's, well, his sexy self I guess, I couldn't be happier with the work.

The only way we could accomplish this was to put together the craziest, most talented, and hardest working character and prop team. Character designers Walter Gatus and Augusto Barranco and prop designers Christie Tseng, Daniel Park, and April Eriksson, thank you, you guys rock! I'm extremely blessed to be a part of this amazing show and part of one of the most talented group of artists in animation, here at Hasbro and in Japan at Polygon.

Hopefully the show and the art you are about to see from the team gives you a glimpse into the amount of work and imagination that goes into creating a Transformers show. And possibly it'll inspire you to pick up a pencil and draw your favorite bots. You never know, maybe one day you will get to design your own childhood heroes. I have to say that almost 30 years later Optimus is still my hero, but hey, this time it's MY Optimus Prime!